

# Find the Safe Route to School

## **Grades**

2-4

## **Subjects**

Health

## **Duration**

1 – 2 hours plus extensions

## **Materials**

Mapping handout (school area map)  
Danger and Safety cards

### *Additional materials*

School area map overhead  
Overhead projector  
Colored overhead pens  
Other maps for comparison  
Colored pens or pencils for in class mapping

## **Objectives**

The students will be able to:

- Identify safe routes to and from school
- Identify dangers students might encounter on their route to school
- Identify places that are not safe to play or walk
- Understand the dangers of industrial sites, traffic, large equipment, rail roads, and other hazards on their route to school

## **Set**

Introduce this activity by discussing how much time students spend going to and from school and playing on and near the school grounds. Ask students how they get to and from school, to or from their friends house, or to and from the store. Do they usually go by themselves or with someone? Do they walk, get rides from their family members or friends, ride their bikes, scooter or skateboard or take the bus. Do they follow a road or take short cuts?

## **Instructional Input**

### **Mapping Activity**

Instruct students to use the map provided to best trace their route to school using a colored pen or pencil.

Students will probably have more than one route because they rely on different modes of transportation. Many people drive some days and walk or ride other days. Use different colors for each route and create a key. For example:

Yellow= driving route

Red= biking route

Green=walking route

After students have finished mapping their routes to school, ask them if they think it is a safe route to school. At this point, you may want to ask students to share with the class situations that they think are dangerous and make them feel afraid as well as situations in which they feel safe.

Write a list on the board of things that could be dangerous to students while going to or from school. Ask the students to come up with ideas to add to the list. The items in the list should apply to the students' daily commute. Ask them to think about their daily trip to school while coming up with ideas for the list.

List items might include:

- 1) Crossing a busy street
- 2) Cars going too fast
- 3) Railroad tracks
- 4) Big trucks
- 5) A barbed wire fence
- 6) A bull dozer or other heavy equipment
- 7) A big dog
- 8) No sidewalks
- 9) No bike paths
- 10) Shortcuts (can sometimes be dangerous depending on the route)
- 11) A factory, industrial site or dump
- 12) A dump
- 13) A big cliff or steep hill
- 14) A river or canal

Ask students if they encounter any of the dangers on the list on their way to school and ask them to elaborate on why they are dangerous. Then ask students to come up with a list of things that help make their trip to school safer.

List items might include:

- 1) Asking a parent or sibling to accompany them to school
- 2) Avoiding dangerous places like industrial sites, rivers, dumps, big cliffs, railroad tracks, and busy streets
- 3) Using a crosswalk
- 4) Walking on the side walk or following a street
- 5) Avoiding houses with big dogs
- 6) Using a bike path
- 7) Staying away from big trucks
- 8) Avoid taking shortcuts

### **Safe routes matching game**

Explain to the students that you will be playing a matching game to help them find a safe route to school. Tell students that they should discuss how their behaviors and actions can make some situations dangerous. Students can play in groups of 2 or 4.

Place all of the cards face down on the table one by one. During their turn, each student can turn over two cards. The object of the game is to find a danger card and a safety card that decreases the danger.

If the student turns over a pair during her/his turn, s/he can keep the pair. If not, the cards should be turned face down again in the same spot. The next student then turns over two cards to try to find a matching pair. During the game, students should discuss whether the picture represents a danger or a safety feature and whether or not they make a danger/safety pair. There are many possible combinations for danger and safety pairs, since some dangers can be solved in multiple ways. At the end of the game, the student with the most pairs wins.

### **Closure**

Instruct students to draw the dangers that they encounter on their way to school on their original map and to look for routes that avoid these dangers.

Bring in pictures taken at a child's eye level of dangers and safety features around the school and nearby neighborhoods. Have students create a "Safe route to school" collage with these pictures to display in the classroom.